

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-01 DPW-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 /088 W

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P R 050633Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4677

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION GENEVA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 4695

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O...11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, SREF, VS

SUBJ: DEBRIEFING OF DAN RODILL, NEWSDAY STRINGER FROM SAIGON

REF: VIENTIANE 4675 (NOTAL)

1. WE FINALLY CONTACTED DAN RODILL (REFTEL) BY INVITING HIM TO 4TH OF JULY RECEPTION. HE THEN CAME BY EMBASSY MORNING JULY 5 FOR "DEBRIEFING." CONVERSATION WAS CORDIAL ENOUGH BUT NOT ALTOGETHER SATISFACTORY; RODILL IS RATHER SLEAZY TYPE AND HAS CHOSEN TO PLAY IT CLOSE TO THE VEST UNTIL HE GETS TO BANGKOK AND DELIVERS HIMSELF OF WHATEVER HE HAS. AT SAME TIME, HE IS IN NO HURRY TO GET TO BANGKOK AND PREFERS TO WAIT HERE FOR ANSWER TO HIS JULY 1 LETTER (NOW FOLLOWED UP BY TELEGRAM JULY 5) TO "PRG FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL" NOW IDENTIFIED AS BUU (OR BUI) HUU NHAN. RODILL IS CONFIDENTIAL

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NOT A SHARP OBSERVER AND DOES NOT HAVE USUAL JOURNALIST'S

DESIRE TO GET HIS STORY TO THE WORLD SOONEST.

2. WE WERE HANDICAPPED IN DEBRIEFING RODILL BY ABSENCE OF FILES HERE, INCLUDING DEPT'S INITIAL LISTING OF AMERICANS KKBOWN/BELIEVED TO BE IN SVN AND OUR OWN TELEGRAM OF APPROX MAY 25 WHICH REPORTED INFO FROM BERNARD EDINGER OF REUTER'S (REQUEST DEPT REPEAT THOSE TELEGRAMS TO US); MOST OF OUR FILES FOR PERIOD PRIOR TO JUNE 1 HAVE EITHER BEEN DESTROYED OR SENT TO THAILAND FOR SAFEKEEPING. HOWEVER, RODILL CONFIRMED THE INFO GIVEN TO US BY EDINGER ON POSNER AND VARIOUS OTHER AMCITS AND HAS NO RPT NO NEW NAMES. HE HAD INTERVIEWED POSNER AND OTHERS FOR CBS (WHICH HE REPRESENTED DURING MAY) OR ON HIS OWN BUT HAS NO IDEA WHETHER ANY OF TAPES EVER REACHED OUTSIDE WORLD.

3. THE AMERICAN ABOUT WHOM RODILL SEEMED TO KNOW MOST IS RICHARD ("MIKE") MIELKE, FORMER EMPLOYEE OF USAID PUBLIC SAFETY DIVISION AND (FOR A TIME IN 1973) OF DAO SAIGON. MIELKE, ACCORDING TO RODILL, IS CONTINUING HIS ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF MIA'S TO EXTENT HE CAN. AS RODILL PUTS IT, MIELKE IS INTERESTED IN ARTICLE 8(B) OF PARIS AGREEMENT (MIA'S) BUT LOCAL OFFICIALS ARE MORE INTERESTED IN ARTICLE 21. MIELKE HAS SUPPOSEDLY MADE A NUMBER OF TAPE-RECORDED REPORTS FOR THE VIVA ORGANIZATION AND TRIED TO GET THEM OUT. RODILL HIMSELF CLAIMS TO HAVE A 40-MINUTE TAPE OF INTERVIEW WITH MIELKE WHICH IS DESTINED IN FIRST INSTANCE FOR VIVA, ALTHOUGH RODILL SAYS HE INTRODUCES MIELKE ON TAPE BY SAYING "THIS IS DAN RODILL FOR ABC NEWS, SAIGON" ETC. RODILL SAYS HE WAS CARRYING THIS TAPE ON HIS PERSON WHEN HE LEFT SAIGON AND THUS, UNLIKE ALL OTHER MATERIALS, IT WAS NOT CONFISCATED (REFTEL). RODILL PREFERRED NOT TO TALK ABOUT CONTENTS OF TAPE IN DETAIL BUT SAYS IT CONTAINS NOTHING ABOUT AID OFFICER PAUL STRUHARIK OR OTHERS CAPTURED IN BAN ME THUOT AND LAST REPORTED AT THANH AN, PLEIKU PROVINCE; MIELKE, WHO KNOWS STRUHARIK, IS NEVERTHELESS PERSONALLY INTERESTED IN STATUS OF STRUHARIK AND COMPANIONS.

4. RODILL CLAIMED NO KNOWLEDGE WHATEVER OF CONSULAR OFFICER JAMES F. LEWIS AND SEEMED GENUINELY UNAWARE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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FACT THAT BODIES OF TWO MARINES KILLED AT DAO APRIL 29 HAD NOT BEEN EVACUATED.

5. RODILL HAD ONLY GENERAL COMMENTS ABOUT LIVING CONDITIONS, ETC., IN SAIGON. HE SAID ALMOST EVERYONE WAS SHORT OF MONEY AND THOUGHT THERE WOULD SOON BE CASES DESTITUTION AMONG AMERICAN RESIDENTS, IF THERE WERN'T ALREADY. ONE EXCEPTION WAS MIELKE, WHO ACCORDING TO RODILL

CONTINUES TO LIVE COMFORTABLY AT HIS HOUSE IN GIA DINH;
MIELKE'S BAR IS BETTER STOCKED THAN BAR AT LANE XANG HOTEL IN
VIENTIANE. MIELKE IS UNDER INTERMITTENT RESTRICTIONS ON
MOVEMENT BUT STILL GETS AROUND TOWN. HE SEEMS TO BE
GROUPED WITH JOURNALISTS AND REPS OF APPROVED ORGANIZATIONS
SUCH AS AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE IN SENSE THAT HE
DEALS WITH "MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS" ON REGISTRATION,
CONDITIONS OF STAY, ETC., RATHER THAN WITH IMMIGRATION DEPART-
MENT TO WHICH LESS PRIVILEGED FOREIGNERS ARE DIRECTED. HOWEVER,
WITHIN LAST TWO WEEKS OR SO MIELKE'S WIFE WAS VISITED
BY AN UNIDENTIFIED VIETNAMESE WHO SAID "WE KNOW YOUR
HUSBAND IS A MAJOR IN THE CIA" (SIC). THERE IS DIVISION
OF OPINION IN SAIGON PRESS CORPS AS TO WHETHER THIS
CALL WAS OFFICIAL OR A POSSIBLE FREE-LANCE EXTORTION
ATTEMPT. (RODILL NOTED THAT THERE ARE "ALL KINDS OF
LOW-RANKING CADRES RUNNING AROUND," SO IT'S HARD TO
TELL WHO IS WHO.)
CHAPMAN

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